



Kartini *Kebaya*: The Influence of Foreign Culture in Javanese Women's Clothing

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Abstrak. Clothing is one of the results of human culture which always changes as one culture meets another. Kartini *kebaya* is a clothing style for Javanese noblewomen that was popular around the 19th century. The problem discussed in this article is the development of women's clothing in Java. What cultural influences does Kartini's *kebaya* have? This research aims to determine the development of Javanese women's clothing, especially the Kartini *kebaya*. The relevance of this research is related to the existence of Kartini's *kebaya* as an Indonesian icon. The research method used is a historical method that begins by collecting data related to Javanese women's clothing, both from temple reliefs, statues, contemporary foreign news, and developments in Javanese women's clothing. The research results show that Javanese women's clothing has developed along with the meeting of Javanese culture with foreign cultures that came to Java. The foreign nations that influenced the development of the *kebaya* in Java were the Arabs, Chinese, Portuguese, and Dutch.

Keywords: Kartini's *Kebaya*, Foreign Culture, Javanese Women, Influence

1 Introduction

The Kartini *kebaya* is a Javanese noblewoman's fashion style that was popular around the 19th century. The problem discussed in this article is the development of women's fashion in Java. What cultural influences does the Kartini *kebaya* have? Why is there a foreign influence on the *kebaya*? This study aims to determine the development of Javanese women's fashion, especially the Kartini *kebaya*. The relevance of this study is related to the existence of the Kartini *kebaya* as an icon of Indonesia. Previous studies related to the *kebaya* have been conducted by Cattoni [1], Hussin, et al. [2], Sulistyaningtyas [3], Trismaya [4], Fitria and Wahyuningsih [5], and Kusumadewi and Jurusalem [6]. However, none of the previous studies are similar to the topic of this study. Thus, this study can be continued.

2 Methods

The research method used is a historical method by utilizing archaeological data and historical data. Archaeological data in the form of temple reliefs, statues, and Chinese news sources. The historical data includes records related to Javanese women's clothing as well as the results of previous research that is relevant to this research. The research began with collecting data related to Javanese women's clothing, both on temple reliefs, worn by statues in certain temples, based on written news from contemporary foreigners, and the development of Javanese women's clothing to date [12]. Searches for this data were conducted online or by observing certain temples. Observations aim to obtain a more complete picture of Javanese women's clothing during the Hindu-Buddhist period [13]. Information related to women's clothing during the Islamic period can be obtained from Cortesao [14], Raffles [15], and Reid [16], and Javanese women's clothing during the Colonial period can be found from Lombard [5] and Doellah [17]. The process of collecting this source combines primary and secondary sources [18]. Primary sources are obtained from observation. Secondary sources are obtained from relevant writings such as books, journal articles, and other literature. Secondary sources were obtained from libraries, personal collections, and the internet. The available sources were then criticized and interpreted. The results of the analysis above were then connected and reconstructed into an article about “Kartini *Kebaya*: The Influence of Foreign Culture on Javanese Women's Clothing”.

3 Result and Discussion

Clothing is one of the cultural products that always changes along with the meeting of one culture with another. Koentjaraningrat [15] stated that culture is dynamic, always moving along with the increasing number of people moving from one place to another, among others because of trade and colonization, such as what happened in Java [9][11][12][13]. Since before the beginning of the Common Era [16] Java, which is part of the Nusantara, has been connected with other nations due to trade. Over time, international trade in Java has become increasingly massive, causing cultural acculturation [17][18]. Moreover, after the Nusantara was colonized by the Dutch, cultural changes became even faster, among others having an impact on the clothes worn by Javanese women [12][13].

3.1 Javanese Women's Clothing During the Hindu Buddhist Period

Around the 7th to 15th centuries AD, Java was under the influence of Hindu-Buddhist culture. Figure 1 shows the changes in the dressing style of Javanese women who gradually wore an upper body covering, the *kemben*. The use of the *kemben* persisted into later periods [12][13].

Candi Mendut, 9th CenturyCandi Singasari, 13th
CenturyCandi Ngrimbi, 14th Century**Fig 1.** Women's clothing styles during the Hindu Buddhist period

3.2 Javanese Women's Clothing During the Islamic Period

Islam entered Java marked by the arrival of Muslim traders from Persia called *Ta-shih* by Chinese news [19][20][21]. They came intensively to Java starting in the 7th century because in Java there was a large trading port that was a magnet for traders from all over Asia, namely in Holing [19][20][21]. The influence of Islam became more massive in Java in the 15th century with the role of Walisanga, who came from a background as traders from Samarkand and Persia [22]. At that time, there were also many Muslim Chinese traders who helped convert Java to Islam [23], as did traders from Gujarat, India [24]. One of the teachings of Islam is to cover the *aurat*, namely parts of the body that are not appropriate to be shown to others [25]. This influenced the style of dress of Javanese Muslim women to cover the upper body. At first it was only covered with a *kemben*, then it was completed with clothing called a *kebaya*. According to the Hobson-Jobson Dictionary [26], *cabaya* is a term introduced by the Portuguese from the Arabic *kaba*, which means outerwear. The term *cabaya* became increasingly used by nations influenced by the Portuguese, therefore it is not surprising that in the archipelago there are various types of *kebaya*. In general, the form of *kebaya* is a loose, open-front top worn by women and men in the 15th century. This clothing model was used by people from various nations, such as Arabs, Indians, Chinese, and Portuguese. In Java, the clothing then became clothing commonly worn by Javanese women.

3.3 Women's Clothing in the Colonial Period

Kebaya during the Colonial period became increasingly developed, because this clothing was not only used by Javanese women, but also by Chinese, Indo, and Dutch women [13]. Because they did not want to be the same as the clothes of the local population, then the *kebaya* worn by Indo or Dutch women was given a variation of lace on the edges [13]. The development of the *kebaya* carried out by Chinese women was the existence of the *encim kebaya*, namely a V-neck *kebaya*, which was given beautiful embroidery on the edges [27, figure 3b]. The development of the *kebaya* carried out by Javanese women was by adding a *kutubaru* on the front, as a representation of the *kemben* shape (figure 3a).



Fig 2. Javanese (a), Indo/European (b), and Chinese (c) Women in *Kebaya*

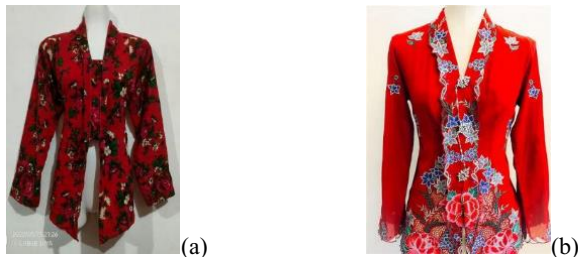


Fig 3. *Kebaya Kutubaru* (a) and *Kebaya Encim* (b)

4 Conclusion

Cabaya or *kebaya* is a loan term introduced by the Portuguese to refer to outerwear worn by both men and women. This type of clothing has an Islamic cultural background, used by Arabs, Indians, Chinese, and Portuguese. Based on the results of the discussion above, it can be concluded that the definition of *kebaya* is loose women's clothing that is open at the front and has no buttons. This definition is in accordance with the *kebaya* worn by the R.A. Kartini family. In its development, there are many types of *kebaya*, including the *kutubaru kebaya* and the *encim kebaya*.

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